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ABSTRACT

This manual provides a detailed outline of the innovative school-community collaboration between the New York City Public Schools and the Children's Aid Society of New York City to meet the pressing needs of children and families in the Washington Heights neighborhood. The manual describes the steps taken to develop the program of social services and high educational goals and standards, some of the obstacles encountered, and the philosophy guiding the program development. The chapters are: (1) "What Is a Community School?"; (2) "Community School Philosophy and Key Ingredients"; (3) "Washington Heights: A Look at What Is Possible"; (4) "Building the Team"; (5) "Overcoming Turf Issues"; (6) "Assessing Community Needs"; (7) "Planning Your Community School"; (8) "Paying for Your Community School"; (9) "Next Steps"; and (10) "Postscript: Washington Heights Five Years Later." Lists 39 suggested readings. (KB)

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Building A Community School

Revised Edition

The Children's Aid Society

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Building A Community School

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Acknowledgments

Inherent in the nature of the community school is the assumption that we can overcome many more challenges when we work together that we can on our own. That was certainly true of the effort in Washington Heights that you learn about in this manual. To that end, we would like to extend our sincere gratitude to all of the people who made this vision a reality.

First of all, we must thank the City of New York, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani whose support has been critical to our ongoing success, and Mayor David Dinkins who proved his innovative spirit by accepting this challenge in 1989.

Thanks also to the City Schools Chancellors who have encouraged our efforts: the late Richard Green, Chancellor Joseph Fernandez, who gave us the opportunity to join forces in Washington Heights; Chancellor Ramon Cortines, and Dr. Rudy Crew, whose personal interest and that of his staff have been so helpful as the project has expanded to a third and fourth school.

Special thanks go to Community School District 6 Superintendent Anthony Amato for sustained leadership to make our unique partnership a reality, not only in the beginning but every step of the way. As the project has grown, so have requests for Tony's time and support, and he is continually gracious in offering both. We are also grateful to the members of Community School Board 6 for their willingness to open up their schools to include new partners.

Without the financial support of The Charles Hayden Foundation and The Clark Foundation when this project was still in its planning stage, none of our ambitious plans and good intentions could have been executed. Since opening these schools, the support of the Carnegie Corporation has enabled us to open a Technical Assistance Center; the Freddie Mac Foundation, Ambrose Wilder Foundation and DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund are supporting adaptations across the country; Hasbro Children's Fund has sustained our early childhood programs; and the William T. Grant and Charles Stewart Mott Foundations have supported our evaluation efforts. The Drucker Foundation has honored our schools with the national Drucker Award for Nonprofit Innovation, and Equitable Foundation has underwritten this new edition of our workbook, as it did the reprints of our original book. Support from the Brookdale, Dodge, Goldsmith, Tiger, and Travelers Foundations, and so many others, has also been so important. Our deep thanks to all of these generous institutions.

Thanks must also be extended to many other partners and colleagues in Washington Heights, including the Association of Progressive Dominicans (ACDP), the Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation, and many elected officials and community leaders. Thanks also to our health partners, Mt. Sinai Medical Center, Columbia Presbyterian Hospital, and the Visiting Nurse Service, and to Fordham University for helping us develop and conduct our evaluation. Special thanks to the Society's Trustee Judy Dimon and the generous members of the Education Advisory Board which she chairs; to Helene and Alexander Abraham for early and sustained assistance; and to the many people whose numbers make it impossible to list them by name, but who are crucial to our success every day.

Last, but by no means least, we wish to extend our thanks to the people of Washington Heights. Their determined spirit and overwhelming commitment to securing a quality education and a better future for their children has been a constant source of inspiration for us all.

Preface

In 1989, The Children's Aid Society of New York City joined in an unprecedented partnership with the New York City Public Schools, the city's Community School District Six and community-based partners to develop a comprehensive response to the pressing needs of children and families in the northern Manhattan neighborhood of Washington Heights.

The challenge was a formidable one. A 1987 needs assessment conducted by The Children's Aid Society found a neighborhood struggling with the city's most overcrowded schools, a large population of poor, first-generation immigrant families, many young people at risk of dropping out of school, and a dangerous scarcity of health and social service providers. It also found a community with a drive to succeed and a determination to help its children succeed.

Recognizing the urgent need for services, The Children's Aid Society began to survey the community for possible sites to open a new community center in Washington Heights. The answer quickly seemed obvious, however: Instead of building a new community center, we would build a new alliance with the public school system and community to create what was needed: a "community school." The community school would be an integral part of the community, reach the highest educational goals and standards, and contain all of the health and welfare services of a large social service agency. It would serve as a focal point in the community to which children and their parents could turn for education as well as a vast range of other supportive services. Medical, dental, mental health, recreation, youth programs, family life education and summer camping services would all emanate from this one institution, while the clear focus of every activity remained on academics and learning. And the institution would be open six or seven days a week, 15 hours a day, year-round. What we proposed was not simply to use the schools in the after-school hours, but to work side-by-side with the parents, teachers and community to ensure that children are given every chance to succeed.

The plan answered the calls of many policy experts who have contended for years that services for disadvantaged families were too fragmented to meet their multiple and interconnected needs, that educational achievement cannot occur if children and their families are in crisis, that teachers are too often required to serve as social workers, and that parents were being left out of the educational picture, and often alienated from the schools their children attend.

Our vision became a reality in March of 1992 when Salome Ureña Middle Academies IS 218 opened its doors. Since then, three additional community schools, PS 5, IS 90 and PS 8, have opened in Washington Heights, bringing the total number served by the Society to nearly 7,000 children and an additional 3,500 teens and adults. All of these schools, while differing structurally and programmatically, have created a sense of excitement and renewed hope in this community.

The Children's Aid Society published the first edition of this workbook in 1993, shortly after the first two community schools opened. Our purpose was to inspire communities throughout the nation to create their own "community schools" and to guide them through the process. The book has been enormously popular and a useful tool to educators, government leaders, social service providers, parent groups and countless others who are concerned about the educational prospects of our young people. A total of 15,000 copies have been distributed in three separate printings.

In the five years since opening our first school, and the four years since publishing the first guide, we have accumulated a wealth of experience and practical lessons about the day-to-day challenges of running a community school — lessons we believed would be extremely instructive to anyone starting down this exciting path. With the 20/20 vision that hindsight so kindly bestows, we believed we had an obligation to update this book and share our experiences with both an old and new audience of educational innovators.

One thing is for certain: the audience for this message has clearly grown. When we published our first guide, there were some existing models of school-

community partnerships, but the movement could best be described as a fledgling one. In the intervening years, a whole new wave of school-based programs has emerged, constituting a legitimate public school reform movement. While the models may differ in methods, scope or philosophy, all of these programs share the goal of bringing the community's best resources directly into the schools to ensure that children are physically, emotionally and socially ready to learn.

In 1994, The Children's Aid Society responded to this wave of interest by launching the Community Schools Technical Assistance Center at IS 218 to help other communities learn from our experience and adapt their own model. With support from the Carnegie Corporation, the Center has introduced nearly 2,500 visitors from government agencies, foundations, corporations, parent associations, schools and social service agencies nationwide to the CAS model through site visits and workshops at our schools in New York and, on occasion, site visits to the city thinking about establishing community schools.

Since 1996 the Center has been providing intensive technical assistance to six cities establishing community schools modeled after our program. The DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, Fordham University and Children's Aid are supporting efforts in Long Beach, California, Salt Lake City, Utah, and Boston, Massachusetts. A planning grant from the Freddie Mac Foundation is helping with start-up activity in Washington, D.C. In Berkeley, California, a community schools project is currently underway and will serve as a model for three other counties. In St. Paul, Minnesota, the Ambrose Wilder Foundation is working with state and city partners to open three schools in 1998; and similar work is being planned for Atlanta, Georgia with support from IBM. Dozens of other communities are being helped with less formal assistance, and as this book goes to print, the Society is exploring the possibility of designating two schools as training sites for the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, which works in 2,600 locations nationwide and reaches hundreds of thousands of children

and teenagers daily.

As was the case in our first workbook, this book provides a detailed outline of the innovative collaboration at work in Washington Heights, the steps we had to take to reach our goals, some of the obstacles encountered, and the philosophy that guided us every step of the way. It also presents the community schools movement in the context of substantive school reform, and includes expanded chapters on planning the program, sustaining the partnership, and — perhaps most critically — funding the community school.

This manual is designed to serve as an illustration of what is possible, not a rigid plan. More than anything, we hope this book illustrates that, despite the challenges of collaboration, the seemingly rigid nature of our public school system, and stubborn cynicism, it is absolutely possible to radically transform our schools into powerful institutions that offer children, their families and entire communities true hope for a better future.

Philip Coltoff
Executive Director
The Children's Aid Society

New York, New York
October, 1997

What is a Community School?

Community Schools in the Context of Public School Reform

New Realities for Families and Children

Academic Achievement Has A Social Context

What is a Community School?

A community school is an educational institution that combines the best educational practices of a quality school with a wide range of vital in-house health and social services to ensure that children are physically, emotionally and socially prepared to learn.

Sometimes called "full-service" or "extended-service" schools, they offer a rich program of child and family support services within the school building, in full partnership with the school personnel, including extended-day instruction, recreational and cultural programs, on-site health and mental health services, social services, parent support programs, adult education and teen programs. Typically, community schools are open afternoons, evenings and weekends throughout the year and serve students, their families and the wider community. Parent involvement, participation and sanction is key to this process.

Individual community schools may offer different program elements or teaching styles, but the basic philosophy of the community school model is simple: *educational excellence, combined with needed human services, delivered through school, parent and community partnerships.*

Community Schools in the Context of Public School Reform

There is no question in the minds of most Americans that our public schools need to be radically transformed if they are going to prepare our children to compete and thrive in today's world. The question is: What form should that change take?

There have been a myriad of reforms instituted in school districts across the country over the last decade, resulting in a veritable patchwork of innovations, including national and state curriculum standards, magnet schools, new training approaches for teachers, new test instruments, school-based manage-

ment techniques — the list is long and growing longer. But despite all of these "revolutionary" changes, American schools still operate very much the way they did at the beginning of the 20th century, even though very little about our nation remains the same as we prepare our children for the year 2000 and beyond.

New Realities for Families and Children

In four areas in particular we face new realities:

1. INCREASING POVERTY: According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *1996 Kids Count Data Book*, poor children — one out of five children across our nation, and three out of five in many large cities — face overwhelming odds against their success. They are more likely to be sick as toddlers, unprepared for kindergarten, fall behind in grade school or drop out of high school, and are less likely to be economically successful as adults.

2. EDUCATIONAL INEQUITY: A 1996 Carnegie Corporation report, *Years of Promise*, finds that these children also have less access to quality preschool programs, less rigorous elementary schools, fewer afterschool programs, and teachers who have lower expectations for them. The report also points out that, across all economic levels, the connections between home and school are weak, that schools cannot deal adequately with children's multiple needs, and that teachers are often insufficiently supported.

3. REDUCED FAMILY INVOLVEMENT: A 1994 Department of Education report found that parent involvement in education improves children's grades, test scores, homework and attendance, and that parents are willing to give more time to this effort but were unsure of their importance and uncertain of what to do. Thus, 40% of parents report having school-age children who are simply alone and on their own after school.

4. WEAK COMMUNITY SUPPORTS: Outside of the school building, Carnegie

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reports that the lack of comprehensive community supports, and insufficient integration of existing services, are steep barriers to children's development. The poorest communities have the fewest resources of all. Despite our knowledge that productive afterschool activities prevent casualties in adolescence, one out of four 9-year-olds watches television five or more hours a day. Teen and preteen programs are especially scarce, although we know that the largest contributing factor to school failure and drop-out is also the largest risk factor for youth crime, teen pregnancy and other devastating outcomes — the inability to read and achieve in school.

Academic Achievement Has A Social Context

In the face of such realities, public schools that are closed evenings, weekends and summers are a luxury that our nation can no longer afford. Although we may wish to treat it as a separate component, education simply does not take place in isolation from the rest of a youngster's life. Along with family stresses and poverty come a growing number of children who arrive at school sick, hungry, tired, apathetic, sometimes abused, and in many ways traumatized by the living conditions with which they must contend each day.

But the problem is also broader than the simple use of the school building, and the opportunity is also greater. As problematic as the public schools are, they remain the one neighborhood institution with the greatest potential for interaction with children and family. And while we may experiment with privatization, school vouchers or school choice, it is the public school that will continue to serve the vast majority of American children in urban, suburban and rural school districts alike.

The challenge, then, is to build the school-community partnerships that recognize these new realities, that bring teachers, parents and community agencies together to ensure that every child enters the classroom ready to learn. This is the strategy behind the community school model.

Community School Philosophy and Key Ingredients

Community School Philosophy

Key Ingredients

Helping Children Succeed

Community School Philosophy and Key Ingredients

Community schools are designed to enhance education by bringing schools, parents and community agencies together to ensure that every child is prepared to learn.

Rather than asking teachers to be both teachers and social workers, community schools free teachers to teach, by integrating into the fundamental design of the school the critical services students need to achieve. Rather than asking children and parents to travel to needed family services, the model brings the services to the facility where the children and families are.

The community school is not meant to replace the traditional roles of families or teachers, but to modify the relationship and provide vital support to both.

There is no single way to design and implement a community school. To be effective, communities must develop and tailor a program that reflects their strengths and resources, and meets the unique needs of their children and families. Therefore, instead of presenting a rigid program design to follow letter-by-letter in developing your community school, we present to you an overall philosophy, a set of key ingredients, an example of what is possible based on our experience, and questions you should be considering as you plan and carry out your program. Use this information as a foundation upon which you can create your own community schools.

Community School Philosophy

When we talk about community schools, there is a tendency to focus on the services they make available to children and their families. But there is a much broader philosophy that governs our four schools in Washington Heights

and best defines what makes a school a community school. Establishing community schools means transforming schools into new institutions — institutions that are primarily focused on educating children, but can also help strengthen entire communities.

Essential to their success is a committed partnership between the school and school district, social service provider and parents — a partnership that shifts the ownership of the school and its facility to a shared ownership, making it possible to provide a "seamless" network of services and for schools to become the center of community life.

Key Ingredients

Knowing that no one model is the "right" model, communities interested in developing community schools should keep in mind what might be considered the key ingredients that make community schools unique:

EDUCATION FIRST — While the community school concept allows for a revolutionary vision of the role a school can play within the community, its primary goal is the education of children. The enriched health and social services of the school are all designed to ensure that children are emotionally, socially and physically prepared to learn and achieve. The extended-day programs add the equivalent of an hour and a half a day, or one full school day a week, for quality learning and teacher interaction.

COLLABORATION — Community schools should be planned and implemented by an active partnership that includes representatives of the school, parents, community leaders, and community social service agencies with a common mission, mutual goals and shared decision-making. The focus is on a shared vision of the good results that can happen for children if we bring leadership together.

PARTNERS, NOT TENANTS — The lead social service provider must be viewed as a partner in the school in every way, not simply as a tenant who uses or rents the gym or classrooms from 3:00 to 10:00. Regular collaboration between school faculty and agency staff must reflect that sense of cohesion.

A LONG-TERM COMMITMENT — Inherent in the nature of this partnership is a long-term commitment on the part of the agency and the schools. This is not a one-year project that will close if a key person takes a new assignment, but a permanent fixture in the community, and a long-term commitment to children and families.

INTEGRATED SERVICES — Community schools should be designed to address the emotional, social and health needs of children and their families through a network that works as a team. In the Children's Aid model, mental health problems are not handled separately from physical health problems and school problems are not treated separately from health problems. Instead, the school team looks at the whole family and works together to develop comprehensive solutions.

HIGH LEVEL OF PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT — The community school must work to involve parents at all levels and as early as possible: as partners in planning the community school, as volunteers or staff within the school, as members of the parents association and one-to-one partners in their children's education. To encourage this involvement, the school itself must be seen as a place not just for children, but for entire families.

EXTENDED SCHOOL-DAY — More than "latch-key" programs, the extended school-day program should dovetail with the work children are engaged in throughout the day, to create a "seamless" learning experience before and after 3:00. The atmosphere may be a bit more informal, but should be instructional and allow for hands-on projects that enable students to apply what they have

learned in class. In the CAS schools, teachers play a critical role in designing these programs, and many teachers stay on to teach them.

A FOCUS ON COMMUNITY STRENGTH — Community schools may start as centers of services, but should ultimately become centers of citizen cohesion, where parents can be encouraged to help themselves and neighborhood residents can effect real change in their communities. In the long run, the community school should be viewed as a vehicle for the entire community to come together and achieve their highest aspirations.

STARTING FRESH — The community school concept has to be developed from the "ground up," not laid over some other approach that isn't working. Although a new building isn't necessary, it must start from scratch with a team specifically dedicated to working collaboratively to reinvent the school.

Helping Children Succeed

Traditionally, public schools have been structured primarily to achieve academic goals, but increasingly schools are finding that before students can achieve these goals, some basic emotional, social and health needs must be addressed first. In fact, many educators have complained that, despite dwindling resources for the most basic programs, they have been forced to serve as surrogate families and social service agencies to their students — often at the expense of education.

In contrast, the community school brings the full range of health and social services which all families need under the roof of the public school. For service providers and schools alike, it can be a cost-effective way to serve the community's families and children. Instead of spending money to build or maintain separate facilities, resources can go directly to programs. A streamlined system of services can leverage resources and avoid redundancy. The col-

laboration can relieve some of the pressures teachers face in their attempts to serve as teachers, policemen, guidance counselors and social workers, and create more time for them to plan and deliver lessons.

By joining forces, community school partners create a new institution whose services are better coordinated and more comprehensive — truly responsive to the needs of children, and supportive of their educational success.

Washington Heights: A Look at What is Possible

Parent Support and Involvement

Curriculum and Structure

Extended-Day Programs

Summer Programs

Health Care

Mental Health

Early Childhood Programs

Community Development

Giving Parents a Place to Turn

With freshly painted walls, comfortable couches and plants thriving in the sunshine, the Family Resource Centers in the Washington Heights community schools could be mistaken for midtown Manhattan corporate offices. Few schools in New York City — or any city — have such inviting rooms dedicated specifically to parents and families.

Located just inside the main entrances to each school, the Family Resource Centers are the "first point of access" to the schools for parents in Washington Heights. These are bustling places, with constant streams of children, parents, staff and volunteers and the frenetic buzz of conversation in English and Spanish. Parents are always welcome in the resource centers, whether to wait for their children, rest their feet for a moment, look into adult education opportunities or get assistance with a special problem.

The primary objective of the centers is to serve as a front-line defense against the kinds of problems that can keep children from achieving in school. *"If a child comes to school sick or hungry, or if their family is in crisis, he or she will find it very difficult to concentrate on school,"* says PS 5 principal, Alice Stabiner. *"We have to acknowledge and address the difficulties our students face in their lives outside of school so that they have every opportunity to learn and achieve in school."*

Parents who are struggling with a new language or culture can come to the center to get help in completing immigration and naturalization papers, sign up for English as a Second Language and GED classes or talk with a social worker about a family problem. Center staff and volunteers provide referrals to outside agencies, arrange appointments to other on-site services and, when necessary, accompany families to appointments. Job training and counseling, housing assistance, emergency food assistance, assistance with welfare or immigration reforms, and legal aid all fall under the resource center's umbrella of services, giving parents a place to turn when life's daily pressures are too great. But the center also generates opportunities for parents to learn and have fun, like classes in aerobics, computer and weight training and workshops on topics like family budgeting and parenting skills. All parents visit the Resource Centers at least once and 70 percent have used these services on an ongoing basis. At each school, 125 parents a day come into the Family Resource Centers for information and services.

The Center is staffed by bilingual social workers, paraprofessionals, parents and other volunteers. More than 70 parent volunteers now work in the Family Resource Centers and school health clinics; at IS 218, they wear special uniforms that they designed and made themselves. These volunteers are part of a directed program which is training them to become dental assistants, secretaries, receptionists, teacher's aides and, through the entrepreneurship program, to start their own businesses.

"An integral part of our mission is making this school the center of the community, and integral to that is the involvement of parents," says Richard Negron, program director for The Children's Aid Society at IS 218. *"The Family Resource Center helps give parents a sense of ownership over the program and makes them feel welcome in the school community, but at the same time it meets very basic needs in this neighborhood."*

Washington Heights: A Look at What is Possible

Since 1992, The Children's Aid Society, the New York City Board of Education and the local school district, Community School District 6, have opened four community schools in Manhattan's Washington Heights community, including two elementary schools — PS 5 and PS 8 — and two middle schools — IS 218 and IS 90 — which serve nearly 7,000 children and their families.

All of the schools are open all day, all week, year-round and offer a range of on-site services, including health, dental and optometry services, mental health counseling, extended-day academic, arts and sports programs, parenting support programs, and adult education. All of the schools serve students, their families and the wider community.

In each of the community schools, the aim is to shape a "seamless" fusion of school-day activities with extended-day programs to enhance student learning. The Children's Aid Society is a full partner in the running of the schools, with the school principal and the Society's program director sharing responsibility for operating the school. To enrich the program's offerings, other partners have also been enlisted, including local universities, hospitals, businesses and other community organizations. At IS 218 alone, more than 75 different partners now extend and enrich the youth programs.

Although unique in their curriculum, teaching approaches, and governance, these schools are not "alternative" schools. They are governed by all of the usual rules and regulations of the New York City Board of Education. The students live in the school zone, faculty are selected according to contractual rules, and evaluation and assessment is standardized. They are also large schools, with 800 - 1,900 students, and average class sizes of 33 students. Half of these children are Limited English Proficient and essentially all of the children

qualify for the federal free school lunch program.

Below are described the programs and services that make the Washington Heights community schools key resource centers for all community residents, and dynamic models of the community school concept at work.

Parent Support and Involvement

In these schools, parents are asked to join the schools as partners, rather than only as service recipients. In addition to benefiting from the comprehensive services offered by the school, parents are actively involved in the delivery of services; they serve as classroom and lunchroom aides, assistants in the extended-day program, and coordinate special events such as fairs and holiday programs.

✎ Family Resource Centers

Family Resource Centers are located directly inside the doors of each community school, drawing parents into the schools while offering them the critical services they need to care for their children. Staffed by bilingual social workers, paraprofessionals, graduate students, parents, and other volunteers, the Resource Centers encourage parents' closer involvement in their children's education by addressing needs that stand in the way of the youngsters' learning. They provide access to on-site health and learning services, emergency assistance, food, housing, legal aid, and employment assistance; provide referrals to outside services; help with public assistance, tenant's rights and immigration questions; and arrange appointments with other service providers. Throughout the year, the Centers conduct parenting skills training workshops, helping parents learn about child development, safety and discipline issues, while giving them the opportunity to practice new skills in group workshops. Apart from the services offered, the Centers serve as central meeting places for

parents, allowing for the cultivation of supportive friendships.

Adult Education

From 3:30 until 10:00 pm, parents and other adults in the community can take advantage of an extensive program of adult education classes in the Washington Heights schools, including literacy, computer classes, GED preparation, English as a Second Language, aerobics, job readiness programs, and entrepreneurship. Local colleges conduct classes in the evening and a wide range of activities are available for children and parents to learn together on Saturdays. Adult education classes bring parents to the school to pursue their own educational and employment goals, but also help engage them more fully in their children's educational life.

Immigration Assistance

Reflecting the particular needs of the Washington Heights community, Immigration Assistance Programs help families negotiate a complex immigration bureaucracy without fear. Program staff help translate for non-English speaking families, assist families in completing confusing paperwork, and, if necessary, advocate on their behalf with immigration authorities. The families served by these schools know that they have a place to get answers to their questions and overcome obstacles that keep them from settling into their new home and providing a better life for their children.

Kinship Care Support Programs

Special programs reach the sizable population of grandparents and older family members raising children who are not their own — an estimated 40 percent of the children at one of our schools. These programs provide caregivers with parenting classes, home visits, social services and referrals, workshops, and activities designed to build a network of friendships. Their purpose is to

bring these isolated families into the full embrace of the schools, to help caregivers better support the children's education.

Innovative Curriculum and Structure

Each of the schools employs an innovative structure that engages children and makes these large urban schools more personal and intimate for their students.

IS 218 divides its 1,600 students into four theme-based academies, or mini-schools, in Business, Community Services, Expressive Arts, and Mathematics, Science and Technology. Each academy has two self-contained units with five classes and five teachers who act as advisors. The curriculum draws from the latest middle school reforms, including interdisciplinary instruction, flexible scheduling and cooperative learning.

At PS 5, which houses 1,350 students, the curriculum follows all New York State mandates but is organized around two divisions, Sciences and Humanities. Within these divisions, there are separate "learning academies" for grades K - 2 and grades 3 - 5. In a given year, 3rd graders might use Energy as the organizing theme for their science and math work, for example, and American Communities as the theme for their Humanities work.

At IS 90, where overcrowding has required the school to move to double sessions, the extended-day program has been reconfigured to run throughout the day, so that students can be engaged in learning activities even when they are not in class, rather than being left to their own devices.

At PS 8, an Early Head Start pilot has opened the school to preschoolers and parents, helping educators and families move away from the notion that education only begins at kindergarten. The 3- and 4-year-olds who attend these classes are building strong school-readiness skills, and because of the linkages between PS 8 and IS 90, most of these children will have the support of a com-

munity school program for a full 10 years, from age 3 through their middle school graduation.

Extended-Day Programs

Before and after school, a range of activities is available for students and others from the community. The school buildings open at 7:00 am when the children can enjoy a full breakfast and attend one of the "zero" period classes in dance, band, sports or academics. Activities for the elementary and middle school students generally run until 6:00 pm each day. In the evenings, the middle schools are busy with programs for older teens, college students and community adults. All of the extended-day activities are staffed by teachers, social workers, parents, college students, interns and volunteers. Whether they are educational or recreational, all of the extended-day activities are voluntary. Nearly half of the student body currently choose to extend their school day in this way. Extended-day programs fall into the following categories:

✎ Academics

As mentioned, academics are the central focus of the extended-day activities, increasing instructional time by one-and-a-half hours or more per child per day — the equivalent of an additional full school day per week. Before- and afterschool classes tie directly to what children are learning during the school day. Children receive individual tutoring and group help in reading, math, social studies and science. Students who are new to the country can attend English classes and older students can attend enrichment classes to prepare for admission to the city's specialized high schools. Special programs expand the daytime curriculum with hands-on learning activities such as map-making and oral presentations. An architecture program reinforces math ability as students design their ideal home. Educational enrichment classes are designed by the teachers to reinforce learning themes and increase "time on task." We also

lengthen the academic year with our "learn and play" summer school/camp. It runs for seven weeks, five days a week, with three hours of instruction each day.

Arts, Sports and Recreation

The programs also encompass a full range of fun and creative activities that give children opportunities to play and learn in a supervised environment. Arts, sports and recreation activities offer an outlet for energy and free expression, while building children's sense of discipline and self-confidence. Activities may include student-created theater projects, dance, Outward Bound, basketball and track and field. There are scouting programs, a karate class, a Latin Band, and an afternoon radio show. A "hip-hop" music class teaches older students poetry writing, while kindergartners and first graders take part in an intensive choral music program. Programs change from quarter to quarter, and new activities are always being developed to meet new demands.

Teen Programs/Youth Development

In the evening, older teenagers from the community can enjoy the school's recreational facilities and participate in any number of activities including athletic and arts programs, leadership training, family life/human sexuality workshops, high school and college prep services, mentoring, volunteer service, stipended work, and entrepreneurship and career readiness training.

Summer Programs

To reinforce the sense of community and learning that exists during the school year, a variety of summer activities and camp experiences are available through the community schools. The summer program includes day camps held at all of the schools, a teen day trip program, a special summer dance camp with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, and trips to the Society's country camps. Summer schools are offered at all four schools, combining

learning with play. Special programs at the middle schools work with incoming sixth-graders to ease the transition from elementary school and reinforce skills. The schools also hold a host of cultural festivals each weekend for the entire community.

On-Site Health Care

On-site medical, dental and eye clinics at the community schools put children on the road towards healthy growth, starting at birth. This intervention is especially important in a community where health care is limited and families frequently rely on the emergency room as the family doctor. By locating clinics at the schools, health problems can be caught and addressed before they become more serious, and parents need not fear missing a day of work to care for their children.

The elementary schools set the stage for healthy development by offering early health care for infants and toddlers through a special "well baby clinic" that provides check-ups, immunizations, boosters, and early dental care. As children grow, they receive early vision screenings and expanded medical care, including first aid, exams and assessments and medications. Recent immigrants and new students receive full-scale exams. Dental clinics provide dental exams, x-rays, teeth cleaning, and cavity treatment. Eye exams are provided by the State University of New York College of Optometry.

The Society's primary medical and dental partners are the Visiting Nurse Service, which supports the school-based clinics; Mt. Sinai Medical Center, which provides specialized care and medical referrals; and Columbia Presbyterian Hospital, which provides specialized dental and orthodontic care. Every student — and some of their siblings — is seen at least once annually by the clinics, which average 25,000 appointments a year.

Bringing Health Care to the People

Sometimes making sure that children get the health care they need requires more than opening the doors to a sparkling new clinic. First, you have to understand what the barriers to care have been in the first place.

When The Children's Aid Society began examining access to health care in Washington Heights, it learned that, despite an extremely concentrated population and an acute need for services, there were few primary care providers in the community, no public hospitals and only one private hospital. Many families are not eligible for Medicaid, do not currently have health coverage of any kind, and will face a changing and likely more difficult environment as welfare and immigration reforms take effect.

But this shortage of facilities was not the only problem. Language and cultural barriers had left many families afraid of, and outside of, the health care system. Many of their children had never seen a doctor or dentist.

To reach these children, the community school partnership devised a two-step strategy: immediate outreach and service through a mobile health unit, and long-term care through new clinics built on site at each school.

Today, each of the four community schools offers full medical and dental care, food and nutrition counseling, optometry, medical referrals, drug prevention counseling, teen pregnancy prevention counseling and mental health counseling for both children and families. Every student — and often their siblings — is seen at least once by the clinics, which average more than 25,000 appointments a year.

Specialized services are offered as well. At the two elementary schools, PS 5 and PS 8, a "well baby clinic" provides check-ups, immunizations, and early dental care. As children grow, they receive early vision screenings and expanded medical care, including first aid, assessments and medications. Dental care includes exams and x-rays, preventive and restorative work. Eye exams are offered at IS 218's eye clinic, with glasses paid for by Children's Aid and provided by the State University of New York College of Optometry.

The clinics are staffed by doctors, nurse practitioners, dentists and dental technicians from city hospitals and university medical centers. The Society's primary medical partners are the Visiting Nurse Service and Mt. Sinai Hospital. As part of their training, nursing students from nearby Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center also spend one day a week at the clinics, conducting medical examinations and treating illnesses. When children need additional care, they are referred to the Society's own clinics, to Mt. Sinai or Columbia Presbyterian Hospital, or to other specialists as needed.

In a community that constantly battles poverty, violence, drugs and crime, the need for mental health services is tremendous, and there has been great demand for and use of these services since the community schools opened. Services include individual and group therapy, family counseling and crisis intervention, offered on site and by referral to Columbia Presbyterian. During the 1996-97 school year, over 300 families received counseling for behavioral issues, domestic violence, addiction, immigration, separation and loss and abusive relationships.

The major goals of the community school clinics are full medical and dental care for every child, and a 100 percent vaccination rate against childhood diseases. Longer-term, the goal is to address the relationship between health, academic and emotional problems, and to meet the needs of the "total child" from a location that is central to child and family life.

Mental Health Services

In each of the community schools, a committed staff of social workers, psychologists and student interns provides individual and group counseling sessions, for children alone or with their families. Children are referred by the adults who see them each day — classroom teachers, extended-day program leaders, or parent volunteers — who are quick to notice any behaviors that might require intervention. Special programs address particular needs. A teen pregnancy prevention program has been launched at IS 218 and a similar program is under development at IS 90. Town Meetings give all children a forum to discuss troubling issues of dating, violence, peer or parent relationships. An art therapy program has also been added to the middle school offerings. All of these programs help children cope with difficult or traumatic circumstances as they work towards a healthy adolescence and adulthood. Referrals are also provided to Columbia Presbyterian Hospital.

Early Childhood Programs

At the elementary schools, the CAS model begins with early childhood programs which provide comprehensive services for children from birth through age 3 and their families. Three Head Start classrooms and five demonstration classrooms of Early Head Start are in place at PS 5 and PS 8, all of which encourage active family involvement in children's education. Other services include medical and dental services, parent education, family visits and other activities that help parents support their children in these formative years. A specialized curriculum covers child development, safety, discipline, health and nutrition, and encourages parents to take an active role as their child's first teacher by reading, talking and listening to their child, and encouraging exploration.

Community Development

The unique mission of the community school has led to many projects that go beyond other school-based efforts or school and community partnerships. In addition to a Parent Advisory Council of several hundred members, a Family Institute now offers an expanded curriculum of education for the entire community. A locally recruited Business Advisory Council provides technical assistance and builds ties to community leaders. Student and family programs in entrepreneurship have already produced a number of small businesses that have the capacity to generate jobs for the community. Middle school youth have created neighborhood "peace teams" with local police. Environmental awareness and community service are coming together in a "recycle-a-bicycle" project where children repair donated and discarded bikes, earn their own bikes and give others to charity. Community clean-up projects have helped restore public parks and paint subway murals. When the community successfully lobbied the city to build a footbridge over a busy intersection, it was the PS 5 Parents Association that provided the leadership.

All community schools need not have such an extensive menu of services; several components can constitute a good beginning. In the end, it is not the separate program elements that make a school a community school, but the long-term commitment to bring parents, teachers and community together to ensure that children have whatever they need to learn and grow.

In these schools, a teacher can walk down the hall to tell a social worker about a student whose grades have suddenly dropped, and a counselor can stop by a classroom to see if a student is showing any signs of improvement. The community school means that, for children, teachers and parents alike, help is often just a walk away.

Building the Team

The Critical Partners

Other Possible Partners

Clear and Common Goals

Challenges and Rewards

Building the Team

For community schools to be effective and long-lived, they must be developed as true collaborative partnerships from the very beginning — partnerships that are based on common goals and shared decision-making. Planning and implementation cannot be dominated by any one partner, whether it be the school, the health and human service agencies or the parents association. Maintaining this balance is critical, not only from the earliest planning stages but throughout the program's operation.

The Critical Partners

To create your community school, you will need to identify the people and institutions that will form your collaborative team. The earlier you involve all of these critical partners, the better your chances of developing a workable and effective plan with support and cooperation from all sides. Exactly who these team members are may differ from community to community, but they should probably include the following as a starting point:

SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVES — including school superintendents and principals, teachers and other school staff, local school district representatives and central board of education members.

LEAD COMMUNITY AGENCY — essentially, one community agency that is willing to make a long-term commitment with the school or school district to carry out the community school concept and to manage the community involvement for the principal and superintendent. This agency will coordinate the needs assessment, identify and assemble partners, organize early meetings, facilitate the overall process, and in many cases will deliver core program elements and provide leadership for fundraising, staffing and program oversight. The lead

agency bears more responsibility, but should not act unilaterally. It is still subject to the shared decision-making process and ground rules developed by the community school partnership.

OTHER SOCIAL SERVICE AND YOUTH SERVING AGENCIES — including community-based and comprehensive service agency leaders with experience in providing recreational and educational programs, health and mental health services, foster care prevention and other human services. Other agencies that have specialized skills may also be needed in your community, including immigration assistance and advocacy, translation services, public assistance help and housing assistance.

PARENTS AND OTHER COMMUNITY MEMBERS — those people who can provide a lay person's perspective on the services to be provided, who will help to spread the word about the community school's services and goals and create a sense of ownership in friends and family in the community. Parents and other community residents bring unique perspectives and skills to the collaborative and can give firsthand accounts of the struggles and strengths of their neighborhood.

CHILDREN — those who will be most dramatically affected by the changes that take place should be given a way to contribute to the community school effort. By including children and youth in the planning and implementation of the program, you will help ensure that your school reflects the needs of children as they perceive them. It also gives older students genuine opportunities to develop leadership skills and a sense of responsibility for what happens in their community.

FUNDERS — including private funders and government agencies, who can provide input and expertise on program planning and implementation.

Using Economic Change to Drive Social Change

When children are given an opportunity to apply what they learn in the classroom to real-life circumstances, they will always learn more than when subjects are presented in the abstract. That is the concept that guides much of the instruction at IS 218, but it is especially true of the school's Entrepreneurial Studies Program, an innovative program that is helping students connect their classroom learning with real-world experience, while encouraging economic empowerment in the Washington Heights community.

The centerpiece of the program is the SUMA Store (named for the school, Salome Ureña Middle Academies), a business operated and managed by IS 218 students, and a symbol of success for the entire community. Led by a CAS program director and an Advisory Team of students from the Business Academy, the store has an inventory of more than 300 items (paperbacks, school supplies, personal items and snacks!) and grosses more than $50,000 a year. The students run the store in teams of three during each class period. They sell products, do pricing, manage inventory, make recommendations about what to buy and negotiate with suppliers. Mornings, an early crew comes in to clean, set up and sell coffee, juice, and bagels to teachers and staff. At lunch time, the store offers sandwiches, rolls, salads and fruits, and hot "specials" on Wednesdays. As they manage the store, students have the opportunity to practice what they are learning in class, and learn new skills that they can carry with them through life.

A related project for Business Academy students involves setting up their own joint ventures, learning teamwork as they co-manage businesses that sell books, candies, greeting cards, and jewelry. They borrow the initial capital from a student-run bank, and work together to develop their business plans. The project has grown so successfully that the SUMA Store has run out of space to carry all of these products, so week-long "Marketplaces" are scheduled in the corridors just outside the store, where the students can sell their merchandise five times a year.

Families play an active role in the Entrepreneurial Program, too. Family small business development classes, held afternoons and evenings, are teaching parents to make their own products and sell them through their own small business. Included in the latest range of products are Dominican pastries, folk art, ceramics, flowers, baskets, hats and jewelry. Parents also sell their products in their neighborhoods at flea markets. One mother who was on welfare completed the program and went on to open her own successful jewelry business, which now employs a staff of five and operates in Manhattan, Long Island and Connecticut. Another group of three parents and five youngsters opened a catering business that serves at school functions and other events.

In the evening, IS 218 graduates take over the SUMA Store, turning it into the SUMA Cafe, which serves the hundreds of hungry adults and young people attending ESL workshops, college classes, fitness and other adult education programs. Running the cafe has enabled these teens to remain connected to the support systems at the school, as they also become role models for their younger peers.

Engaging students, parents, and teens, the SUMA Store has become an emblem of the community school model. It is a place where children and their parents pass on knowledge to each other, where they learn problem-solving and business skills, and where they increase their abilities and financial independence. As Program Director Raoul Martinez explains: *"Through this program we can expose children to the legitimate opportunities that exist for them in the business world if they are creative and work hard. It would be hard to imagine that at least some of them won't succeed and come back to Washington Heights, bringing jobs, investment and change."*

Other Possible Partners

Since the overriding emphasis of the community school is cooperation and collaboration, there should always be room for new partners. Even if they are not involved from the early planning stages, these new partners can play an appropriate and meaningful role in the school if you recognize their value and work to include them. The idea is to look at resources available in the community and make them work within the community school partnership. Some of these partners might include:

- Child Welfare Authorities
- Area Hospitals and Clinics
- Community Foundations
- Police and other law enforcement agencies
- Local Universities
- Vocational Schools
- Local Businesses and Corporations
- Employers
- Libraries
- Arts and Cultural Institutions

Clear and Common Goals

For many, the balancing act needed for a community school collaboration will require a drastic shift in work style. Participating agencies may have to change how they deliver services to children and families and learn to work alongside other community agencies. School principals and school boards will have to share some of their decision-making power over what goes on in their schools with other members of the community school team.

In Washington Heights, specific problems areas were recognized from the very beginning: *Who makes decisions on allocating space in the school? How do you control access to rooms with valuable equipment and materials such as the computer room, library or music rooms? How would custodial con-*

tracts and opening fees be fulfilled? To facilitate problem-solving in these and other areas, ground rules were agreed upon by partners early in the planning process. By setting broad, shared goals for your community school program — goals that are larger than the goals of any one partner and cannot be achieved by any one group alone — you can help create a sense of cohesion and common purpose among the disparate partners on your team.

Challenges and Rewards

However challenging they may seem, these efforts at unity and teamwork will pay off in the long run. The team approach allows you to bring the expertise of a wide range of fields to bear on the particular problems community children and families face, instead of delivering services piecemeal. Together, the community school team can accomplish much more than any one team member could accomplish alone.

Overcoming Turf Issues

Issues to Confront

Building A Basis for Collaboration

Overcoming Turf Issues

"Turf" issues are bound to surface when you bring people who have different training and experience together for the first time in a common effort. Add to this the inherent power shift that occurs in the community school — away from the school board and principal alone and toward a shared partnership with community agencies and parents — and the potential for bruised egos and crossed signals can be great. In many ways, the initial relationship can take on the characteristics of an arranged marriage. It may take some time to resolve or work through the initial problems, but with foresight and realistic planning most of these issues can be resolved early on.

Issues to Confront

Some of the issues that may come up in the early stages of the collaboration include:

CONFLICTING WORK STYLES — Every profession has a standard by which they are accustomed to working. When you bring teachers together with social workers or health professionals, the difference in work styles may cause some initial turbulence. Even simple things, like a preference for communicating orally rather than in writing, can get in the way of collaboration, unless conscious efforts are made to put the collaboration first.

SPEAKING DIFFERENT "LANGUAGES" — Even when everyone is speaking English, there can be language barriers. That is because within your partnership you will have a mix of lay people and professionals from many different disciplines who have developed and refined their own distinct language or jargon. Terms that have very clear meanings to some may come across as empty expressions

to others. For effective communication to take place, these barriers will have to be broken down and a new common language developed.

PRIORITIES — An asset of the community school program is that it brings people with different expertise together to work as a team for children and families, but these groups will naturally have their own distinct priorities, rooted in their philosophy, training and personal history. If priorities conflict too much, a sense of competition can easily develop between community school team members. Instead, a consensus on common priorities should be developed and kept in focus at all times. This can be accomplished through the creation of a vision statement that lays out the shared philosophy and broad goals that will guide the group's work throughout the planning and implementation process. The benefits of the partnership have to be greater than the fear of identity loss and shifts in agendas, and a vision statement can help clarify the outcomes every partner wants for children and schools in the community.

PARTNER V. TENANT — If social service agencies are viewed as tenants in the building, rather than integral members of the school team, many of the objectives of the community school will be difficult to accomplish. From the outset of the program, everyone involved in making this program work should be clear on the design of the community school and the rationale for this integrated structure.

CREDENTIALS — Professionals with years of training and experience in their fields are not always receptive to the ideas of parents or grassroots participants. Not all partners are going to have credentials that reflect advanced degrees or training, but their knowledge and understanding of the community and personal concern for its children can make their contributions critical parts of the mix. On the other hand, local people with strong ties to the community may be suspicious of professionals who seem disconnected from the realities of the neighborhood. Even among the professions, there may be some bias-

es against one field or another. For the partnership to succeed, members have to come to recognize and respect the strength that comes from each partner's personal experience and from the collective experience of the team as a whole.

Building a Basis for Collaboration

While you cannot plan for every glitch along the way, there are some pre-emptive strikes you can take against dissension in the ranks. Some ideas you should consider in planning are:

PLAN TOGETHER FROM THE START — If all parties involved in the collaboration are also involved in the early stages of program planning, there is going to be an enhanced level of commitment and understanding of the program's goals and mission. Try to involve all partners, including the teachers and social service agency staff who will be expected to work together on a day-to-day basis, as early as possible.

CLARIFY YOUR MISSION — Your first collaborative effort as a partnership might be the creation of a vision statement that will guide you in all of your work. The vision statement should outline specific goals, but should also communicate the partnership's overarching purpose, philosophy and long-term aspirations for the community school.

SET GROUND RULES — Develop ground rules for who will lead meetings, how decisions will be made, how problems will be addressed, how grievances should be handled and other scenarios you can expect to encounter along the way. You won't be able to anticipate every problem, but clear guidelines and procedures can probably help your partnership avoid many potential pitfalls and unnecessary confusion.

START SMALL AND BUILD GRADUALLY — You don't have to open a full-scale community school that incorporates all of the elements covered in this manual right away. You might consider starting with a small afterschool program and a Family Resource Center. Then you might add counseling and parenting workshops; and then medical services. By building up to a full program slowly, you can observe how well the collaboration is working in this limited scope and consider ways of resolving any issues that arise before the program grows.

BRING PARENTS IN EARLY — The sooner you involve parents from the community, the easier it will be to spread the word of your new program, mobilize support and build community acceptance. With their unique perspectives on the problems and needs of their community, parents and other community residents will also have a lot of valuable information to share, especially when you are still at the drawing board.

SHARE DECISION-MAKING — Throughout the implementation of this program, from the design and planning stages to the daily operation of the school, those people who will be depended upon to make this program work should be consulted and given ample opportunities to express their views about new program elements or other changes. But shared decision-making and strong leadership are not contradictory. At various times, depending on the issue, one partner can and should become the group's natural leader.

PREPARE TEAM MEMBERS TO WORK TOGETHER — Before the doors to your community school open, training opportunities should be arranged for teachers, school staff, agency staff, parents and school administrators to develop the skills they will need to make their collaboration work. Small, interactive workshops should focus on developing team building, shared decision-making, communication and conflict resolution skills, as well as improving cultural sensitivity.

STAY FLEXIBLE — Above all else, the community school requires a willingness for all involved to be flexible. Do not expect everything to go exactly as planned and do not expect to be able to continue working just as you always have. Those people who are most capable of adapting to change and who welcome the opportunity to grow and innovate will be critical assets to your community school program.

Among the clearest lessons we've learned in Washington Heights is that team building isn't work that happens once and can be forgotten; it needs continued examination and daily effort. Some partners may resist the challenge, fearing that their professional identity will be lost or that by working collaboratively they will somehow have a "smaller piece of the pie." Our experience suggests that just the opposite is true. Collaboration reduces service duplication, frees up time and funds for additional services, and increases the effectiveness of professional services. The investment in flexibility and patience pays off — in benefits for practitioners, and especially for the children.

Assessing Community Needs

Laying the Groundwork in Washington Heights

Essential Steps in Assessing Needs and Strengths

Assessing Community Needs

To design a community school that will truly respond to the range of needs that children and their families share, there must be a clear understanding of what those specific needs are and what resources and services already exist in their community. This may seem like an obvious statement, but sometimes in the rush to provide services in communities where there is clearly much work to be done, we fail to step back and take the time to examine the unique characteristics of the community to be served. By doing so, you may create a needless duplication of services or, worse, overlook some critical, but basic service needs.

Some communities will have an abundance of quality health services and will not need to include these services in their community school. An impressive parent education program offered by a local college will eliminate the need for such a program at another community school. The community survey can serve as an invaluable guide to community school partners, helping them narrow or expand the focus of their program by providing an accurate picture of pressing needs and existing resources in the community.

No one community school model will fit all settings, and most attempts to impose on a community a prefabricated plan that worked well somewhere else will be met with skepticism and resentment. A successful community school will be designed and tailored in tune with the history, current conditions and political realities of a specific neighborhood.

Laying the Groundwork in Washington Heights

In 1987, five years before the first community school opened in Washington Heights, The Children's Aid Society began a community survey as a first step in determining whether the agency would expand its services into the

community. Through data analysis, interviews and observations, researchers examined the demographics, economic circumstances, housing issues, employment patterns and other "quality of life" issues facing Washington Heights residents. They surveyed the services that were available to neighborhood families at that time, examined data from official sources such as the U.S. Census and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and interviewed community leaders and community residents to gain insights into the community conditions from their point of view.

This work revealed compelling needs and strengths. Among the community's challenges were poverty and crime rates that were the highest in the city; a large youth population in the most overcrowded, poorly performing schools; no public hospitals and only a single private hospital; and status as an unofficial "port of entry" for documented and undocumented immigrant families. On the positive side, there was a hopeful spirit in the community, great value placed on children and their education, and neighborhoods of tight-knit, extended families. These needs and strengths, alike, became key ingredients in building the community school.

Essential Steps in Assessing Needs and Strengths

The process of assessing community needs and strengths is always enhanced by the full participation of the partners involved in designing the community school, including parent association members, school board members, teachers, administrators, community-based organizations and other human service agencies. But the process cannot rely solely on the opinions and gut instincts of the partners involved. To take a thorough and objective reading of the community's service needs and come to a clear understanding of community residents and the complexity of their lives, an extensive and professional community survey must be completed. This is true for the establishment of

any new service, but particularly for a community school program that is designed to integrate and streamline comprehensive services for children and families.

The community survey is such a vital part of the process that it should be the first major task undertaken by the community school collaborative. While it should be coordinated by someone with experience in this area, the process of collecting data and conducting interviews and surveys can and should involve all members of the partnership. At a minimum, this community survey should include the following steps:

1. Collect Available Demographic Data

Using available data from the local, state and federal governments, census reports, and other appropriate sources, examine the demographics of the community, paying particular attention to key indicators in the areas of health, economics, education, families and children. Gather information on the cultural make-up of its residents, median income, public assistance figures, unemployment rates, housing data, crime rates, child immunization rates and school performance measures. Much of this information can be found at a local public or university library or by calling the sources directly. Telephone books and the Internet can also be good sources of information.

2. Reach Out to Community Residents

Interview a broad range of families and children living in the community to learn about their individual needs and strengths and gain new insight into their perceptions of the community's needs on the whole. What do they see as the most critical needs of the community? How effective are current services? What barriers to service do they face? You can reach out to community residents through a number of different methods, including formal and informal interviews, surveys and community meetings. Parents and community representatives can play an active role in gathering information and conducting

interviews and surveys with their families, friends and neighbors.

3. Tap the Expertise of Local Leaders and Human Service Professionals

Interview community leaders, school administrators and teachers, health professionals, human service leaders and front-line staff, as well as business, police, and religious leaders to gain their perspectives on the special needs of the community, the effectiveness and range of all services offered in the community and the barriers they see that prevent families from accessing those services. This can be done through small informal meetings, individual interviews, phone calls or community forums.

4. Learn What Services Currently Exist

Develop an inventory of the resources and services currently available in the community, including a detailed description of the program areas they cover. Pay particular attention to youth programming, health services, child and family support services and educational opportunities. How have these resources been utilized? How accessible are they? Which are stretched beyond capacity, or missing from the mix, and which are underutilized?

5. Look at the Community's Strengths

These may include tangible resources such as a recent growth in jobs in the area, active parent involvement in area schools, or the proximity of a major university to the area. They can also include more intangible factors such as the positive community spirit, strong family ties and entrepreneurial drive which the Society found in Washington Heights. Ultimately, the realization of the community school's potential may rely as much on these strengths as on its program and service components.

6. Look to the Future

What kinds of issues can the community expect to confront in the coming years? This is the time to start anticipating potential problems or opportunities so your partnership can act beforehand to prevent problems, instead of waiting until they are already upon you.

The community survey is a critical first step in understanding and planning for the needs of your community. The more time you take to include the experiences and viewpoints of all of the key constituencies in your community and incorporate these views and realities into your program design, the more responsive and effective your community school will be.

Planning Your Community School

What, Where, How, When

Measuring Impact

Who Can Help

Planning Your Community School

Once you have taken the crucial steps of building your team and thoroughly examining conditions in your community, it is time to start creating your community school. Most of this work will start on paper, as your community school partners come together to design and plan a program that will satisfy both the vision you have established for your program and the conditions and resources you have identified in your community survey.

While your vision statement may have spoken in broad strokes about the partnership's most ambitious goals for your school, it is now time to start talking about specifics. *What services will your community school offer? Who will be eligible for these services? How will you staff these programs? How will you pay for them? How will you ensure a seamless program?* These are difficult questions to answer and will require strategic thinking and careful planning. But the more time you dedicate to planning now, the more effective your program will be in the long-run.

It is impossible to predict the exact course of your program planning process and lay out a prescribed set of steps you should follow, but this chapter highlights some of the questions you will most likely encounter as you shape your community school.

✎ What Will Your Program Look Like?

So far, you've been dealing with many exciting possibilities for your community school. But now you have to deal with the concrete reality. What exactly will your program look like? What will it emphasize? Who will it serve? How might it grow? There is no one correct answer to these questions; much will depend on the particular needs and resources of your community. Instead of trying to accomplish everything at once, you might want to identify specific components and phase them in gradually. This can help you to start your pro-

gram on a modest budget, while you investigate creative funding approaches. Starting small and building gradually can give you the added advantage of working out any glitches or technical problems while the program is still on a manageable scale.

✎ Where Will Services be Offered?

In many school districts, space is a scarce commodity, but creative use of the facility, especially during non-school hours, should open up new possibilities. As you plan your program, be sure to anticipate the space ramifications for each program component and to get input from the people who will be most affected by new uses of existing space. If overcrowding is a problem during the school-day, you might ask if there are neighbors that can provide additional space for some programs, or if nearby community centers, camps or colleges can serve as a "second campus."

✎ How Will You Pay for the Program?

Ultimately you will have to develop a strategy for paying for your community school program. Now is the time to consider many different funding resources for your program, including partner agencies, government programs, foundations, corporations and local businesses. Support may come in the form of grants, staff time, or in-kind donations of supplies, equipment and services. In most cases, you will have to combine a variety of sources and re-direct funding from existing programs. Chapter 8 expands on the issue of program funding and offers suggested funding strategies. You will also need to consider how you will maintain your fundraising efforts.

✎ What is Your Timeline?

It's one thing to have this ambitious plan on paper, it's quite another to construct mileposts by which you will establish different aspects of your plan. A timeline will force you to be more realistic about what you can accomplish,

but it will probably ensure greater success in the long term. When will you begin reaching out to potential partners? When will staff recruitment and development take place? What programs will you launch the first year? The second? Are there any services that should be launched to meet immediate needs? As your program begins to take shape, you will need to begin committing yourself to a specific timetable for implementation — and then stick to it.

✎ How Will You Measure Your Impact?

Before you even start offering services, it is helpful to have a plan in place for measuring the impact of your program. A well-conducted evaluation can help you chart your progress in meeting your goals, point out your program's strengths and weaknesses, identify areas that need improvement or drastic change, and demonstrate your commitment to accountability. Now is the time to start thinking about what you want to measure in your evaluation, how you will collect and record critical data, and who will coordinate the overall process.

✎ Where Will You Need Help, and Who Can Help You?

In Washington Heights, The Children's Aid Society sought formal resolutions of endorsement for its community school initiatives from the central Board of Education and the Community School Board. We built trust by bringing key health, afterschool and summer programs into the community, at parents' request, before the first school was opened, and laid the groundwork for a vital Parents Association in the process. We engaged a graduate school of education and social services to document our efforts. We combed the professional literature for approaches that had worked and not worked for others, and talked to everyone we could find who had an interest in school/community collaborations. The list at the back of this workbook can suggest similar resources for you, as can the CAS Technical Assistance Center at IS 218.

Planning is a critical process as you develop your program. It forces you to confront and address serious obstacles and practical realities before you even start offering services. But you cannot possibly anticipate every problem you will encounter in implementing your program, nor should you try. Ultimately, you may find that your program looks very different in practice than it did on paper. That is perfectly natural. The best programs will have a certain measure of built-in flexibility, allowing you to refine and improve aspects of your program as it evolves and grows. Key to this process will be the community school partnership's ability and willingness to look objectively at what is working and what is not — and to have the courage to change direction whenever necessary.

A Unique Governance Structure

Bringing together a team of school staff and administrators, community agencies, parents and neighbors to create a shared vision and program plan is a critical element for a community school. But the real test of the collaboration will not necessarily come in the planning stages, but in the day-to-day governance of this new institution.

From the beginning, the vision for the Washington Heights schools was that the Board of Education and The Children's Aid Society would co-run the schools as equal partners, sharing responsibility for decision-making, policy setting and day-to-day operations. The partnership between the principal and the CAS director is the keystone of the collaboration, supported by several cross-disciplinary committees.

The primary decision-making body in each school is a ***Cabinet*** made up of the principal, assistant principals, CAS director, program directors and district representatives. Meetings take place at least weekly and are chaired alternately by the principal and the community school director, depending on the area under discussion; generally, the principal oversees educational matters, and the director handles health, social services and the extended-day program. The principal's role is strengthened, shared with the director, and broadened to cover the operation of the school from 7:00 am to 10:00 pm, six days per week. Some observers liken the community school director to a "headmaster" who knows all the families and the overall operation, while the principal oversees the instructional operations, faculty, curriculum and assessment. This sharing of the leadership role builds a mutual trust and confidence, which removes much of the typical isolation that principals feel and models the collaborative relationship for others.

Supporting the Cabinet for social services delivery is the ***Pupil Personnel Committee*** (PPC), a committee mandated by the New York City Board of Education to address the needs of "special needs" students. In the community school model, the PPC has become an enriched vehicle for coordinating services and interventions to individual children and families in the school. The committee meets every two weeks to review cases and determine whether a child might need specialized services and who can best provide them. The system has been effective at reducing service duplication and ensuring coordination. Included on the PPC are the school principal, community school director, school psychologist, special education director, CAS social worker, psychiatrist, and nurse practitioner, guidance counselors, and a parent coordinator.

A ***revolving sub-committee*** of community school personnel is on duty around the clock to respond to school crises such as homicide, suicide, or accidents, to a child who has lost a parent or had family or neighbors involved in a civil disturbance or other serious incident. This link between the school and the broader community has been invaluable when a crisis does occur, helping to calm tensions, prevent violence and give children and families prompt support. As a result, the neighborhood has come to see the community school as the place to go for help — a critical point of access for needed services, and a stabilizing institution for the entire community.

An open-door policy exists throughout the community schools, with frequent opportunities for informal communication across and between all levels of staff. This easy access has gone a long way toward developing personal relationships and a sense of cooperation. CAS staff feel comfortable walking into the principal's office, and teachers frequently stop in at the CAS director's office. In most of the schools, the principal's office and director's office are right next door to one another, facilitating their communication throughout the day and a testament, both symbolic and real, to their partnership.

Paying for Your Community School

Community Schools are Cost-Effective

Full Services, Small Incremental Expense

A Menu Approach

Funding Strategies

Federal Support

Paying for Your Community School

Before you can begin offering comprehensive services in your community school, you will need to secure funding to support your efforts. But just as the community school allows for a whole new array of services for children through coordination and linkages within the community, it also allows for an array of funding opportunities and savings opportunities that can ensure that more of the community's spending for children and families goes directly to services. Capitalizing on these expanded funding opportunities can be a delicate art, as it requires you to piece together a number of different funding streams to create a holistic, integrated program.

Community Schools are Cost-Effective

Because of the scope of the community school described in this manual, some people may believe that it would be too expensive to establish one in their community. But one of the most appealing aspects of the program is its cost-effectiveness. By locating all child and family services within a single facility, both schools and social service agencies have opportunities to save.

- ✔ Without rent or a stand-alone building to maintain, agencies can save a substantial portion of their occupancy costs.
- ✔ Outreach costs are reduced because the school acts as a natural outreach mechanism.
- ✔ Transportation costs are minimized because the children are already at the school.

These expense items may represent as much as 20 percent of an agency's budget that can be reinvested in services immediately. From the school's point of view, there are also savings:

- ✔ Teachers are able to dedicate more time to education and less to non-academic issues.
- ✔ Money that the school does spend is more productive because students are coming to school much more prepared to learn.
- ✔ The school building no longer sits empty afternoons, weekends and summers, but has a natural constituency of community groups and other service agencies to whom it can be made available for a fee.

Full Services, Small Incremental Expense

It may help to think of the community school program in terms of costs per capita versus the current cost of public education.

Consider this hypothetical start-up example:

Community School Program Annual Budget	$50,000
Number of Children/Families Served	250
Program Costs per Child	$200
Public School Expenditure per Child	$4,000
Incremental Cost of Community School Program	+5%

In this example, for a modest increase of 5 percent over current spending, children and their families are served all day, year-round, with a full range of services. And because services are part of a comprehensive program, not an

isolated effort, classroom spending, health spending and social services spending all are leveraged for maximum impact.

In Washington Heights, The Children's Aid Society program is a comprehensive one, but at $850 per year, per child, in 1997, it costs just a fraction of the cost of a public school education. Roughly half the cost is for health and dental services, and half for the core programs in education, recreation and preventive services. The model was designed as a prototype, however, and is intentionally a full one; other adaptations have found that the cost for a community school program averages about $500 or less per child.

A Menu Approach

The community school can be implemented on a modest budget or a much larger budget. If you think in terms of services that can be adjusted depending on resources, or phased in over time, you can start with a program of almost any size.

START-UP PROGRAM	MEDIUM PROGRAM	LARGER PROGRAM
Extended-Day Program	Extended-Day Program	Extended-Day Program
Family Resource Center	Family Resource Center	Family Resource Center
	Summer Program	Summer Program
	Health Screenings	Full Health Services
		Teen Programs
		Adult Education
		Small Business Development

Funding Strategies

To fund your community school you will have to draw on resources that already exist in current programs and promote the creative use and coordination of previously separate funding resources. Your funding sources should include government reimbursements, legislative grants, community foundations, private funders, in-kind gifts and fees. Your funding strategies should include the following:

REDIRECTING CURRENT FUNDS — Look at your current budget to determine where you might shift funds to school-based programs. This may mean moving an existing afterschool program to the school or relocating two social workers from another site to staff the Family Resource Center at the school. These moves represent no additional expense and may actually save you money in building maintenance and outreach costs.

EXPLORING NEW FUNDING SOURCES — Since the community school brings together a wider range of service providers, it can open the door to a spectrum of funding opportunities that may not have been available to each partner on their own. Social service agencies can become eligible for funding in education and school-based services, and schools can benefit from funding in fields like child protection, job training and health services. To capitalize on this, you will want to familiarize yourself with all possible funding sources, both public and private.

DEMONSTRATION GRANTS — The community school offers the opportunity for corporate and foundation grants as these funders increasingly become interested in supporting education reform efforts, cost-effective partnerships and models that can be replicated. Funders of research and community development projects may also be interested in the community school and the potential for a

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new approach to public school reform that can affect an entire community.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING — Although their funding practices have been characterized by rigid categorization in the past, more and more government agencies are now looking to fund programs that successfully leverage limited resources by building bridges and coordinating services within the community. (See "Federal Support" below.) The community school fits neatly into this strategy.

FEES FOR SERVICES — Even if it is a very low fee that reflects the financial means of the people you are serving, there should be a charge for at least some of the community school's services. The Washington Heights schools charge a fee for summer day camps and adult education classes. Fees can give the people you serve a sense of ownership and self-help, as well as the motivation to stay involved. And in some cases, the fees you charge can help the program become self-funding.

Federal Support for School-Linked Services

In recent years a whole new wave of school-based service programs along the lines of the community school model has emerged in cities and towns nationwide. This development, though still in its early stages, has drawn greater attention to the need for more integrated funding streams at all levels of government. And as government leaders grapple with shrinking resources, the notion of creating more opportunities for partnering and collaborating at the local level has become more appealing. At the federal level, a number of initiatives — some new, some long-established — present opportunities for creative, comprehensive collaboration between schools and human service agencies to provide school-based services to families and children. Some of these programs include:

THE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS PROGRAM — The only federal program that carries the phrase "community schools" in its title, this Department of Health and Human Services program administered by the Family and Youth Services Bureau of the Administration for Children, Youth, and Families provides grants to community-based organizations to offer a wide range of afterschool programs. The act, which was passed as part of the 1994 Crime Bill, originally authorized $567 million over six years, but was reduced substantially in subsequent sessions. In 1995, 48 communities received grants of approximately $200,000 each. In 1997, $13.8 million was made available.

TITLE 1 — The largest federal program for youth, The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which earmarks $7 billion for the education of disadvantaged children, was amended in 1994 so that some portion of it can be used to involve parents and community agencies in school-wide programs. Title 11 of the ESEA gave school districts the flexibility to use 5 percent of their Title 1 funding for coordinated services programs. Districts must submit a separate application to use ESEA funds in this way. Schools in which 50 percent of the children come from low-income families are eligible to use Title 1 for school-wide programs, estimated at 22,000 schools. Approximately 8,500 schools are currently using funds for comprehensive programs now.

HEAD START/EVEN START — As reauthorized in 1994, the Head Start Program funds state collaboration project grants that help build early childhood systems and access to comprehensive services as well as supports for low-income children in every state. Administered by the U.S. Department of Education, Even Start provides federal "glue money" for local collaborative efforts to improve family literacy through early childhood education, parenting education, adult basic education, and parent-child interactions. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1994 contains provisions that suggest collaboration between Even Start, Head Start, and Title 1 efforts.

SAFE AND DRUG FREE SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES — Also authorized under the ESEA, this program administers a state formula grant program of about $556 million. States award communities grants for comprehensive drug prevention programs, mostly for the provision of classroom-based curricula, but also for programs that link schools and communities.

CHARTER SCHOOLS — The U.S. Department of Education provides seed money ($52 million) to states for the development and implementation of public charter schools. Some 25 states have passed laws making charters available to local community groups.

GOALS 2000: EDUCATE AMERICA ACT — Goals 2000 recognizes and supports the need for a more comprehensive approach by providing resources to states and communities to develop and implement comprehensive education reforms aimed at helping all students reach challenging standards for academic achievement and occupational skills. The act asks states and local education agencies to create broad-based planning groups that include educators, parents, business leaders and representatives of health, community and human service agencies.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE — The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has launched a major effort in recent years to develop effective prevention programs. Most of its funding goes to block grants in states, but about $40 million has been used for discretionary grants to communities. The Title V Delinquency Prevention Program gives states funds to award grants to eligible local governments to develop community-wide prevention strategies. In the past OJJDP funds have been earmarked for special projects and could be used to support community schools.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT — Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities are charged with planning economic and development strategies, one of which can theoretically involve the creation of community schools. HUD also contains a Community Outreach Partnership Center that works with universities to develop community-based programs including community schools.

THE FAMILY PRESERVATION AND SUPPORT PROGRAM — This program provides funding for states to improve the well-being of vulnerable children and their families, particularly those experiencing or at risk of abuse and neglect. States are encouraged to use the program as a catalyst for establishing a continuum of coordinated, integrated, culturally relevant, and family-focused services. Activities range from preventive efforts that develop strong families to intervention services for families in crisis.

While local costs and funding opportunities will always vary, one point is key: Even with a very limited budget, most communities can implement a community school program with the funds they are currently spending on child and family services.

Notes

Next Steps

Next Steps

Now that you understand the philosophy that drives community schools and have had the chance to see what full-scale community schools look like in action, you should be ready to begin shaping your own community schools program. For you, the next steps are your first steps. Here are some suggestions for those first steps:

1. **GET SUPPORT FROM THE TOP** — If you think this program would work in your community, you are going to need the approval and support of top school officials and school board members. Go to them first with your proposal and vision.

2. **START AT THE BOTTOM** — Forge partnerships with critical players in your community. At the minimum, your team should include schools, school boards, parents, community leaders, social service providers and community-based organizations.

3. **ASSESS YOUR COMMUNITY** — Conduct a thorough survey of your community, measuring demographic and economic data, school conditions and performance measures and other data from private and public health, education and social service sectors. Survey the number and scope of existing services in the community. Be sure to get input from human service professionals, parents, school officials, teachers and the broader community through opinion surveys and face-to-face interviews. Keep cultural considerations in mind throughout your research.

4. **CLARIFY YOUR MISSION** — Once your team is in place and the needs of the community are clear, develop a vision statement, expressing the long-term hopes of your community school partnership. Include specific long- and short-term goals for your work.

5. **INVESTIGATE FUNDING SOURCES** — Target both public and private funding sources for any additional funding that might be required. In some cases, existing resources may be leveraged or shifted from funding that already exists in the service areas you are considering.

6. **DEVELOP A DETAILED PROGRAM PLAN** — Chart a vision of what your community school will look like, including the service areas you will pursue, staffing, governance procedures and a timeline for implementation.

7. **START SMALL AND BUILD GRADUALLY** — Instead of trying to accomplish everything in your program design from the outset, consider implementing program components one at a time. By doing so, you may help to overcome turf issues and other potential obstacles while the program is still on a manageable scale. You could start with a Family Resource Center and a partial afterschool program; or start a health program with dental services and add medical later.

8. **ESTABLISH A MECHANISM FOR MEASURING SUCCESS** — From the start, you should have a plan for gauging your success, based on the goals you have established for your program. It is best if this evaluation is conducted by experienced professionals and if it measures both "process" and "outcome" goals. Contact your local university schools of social work and education for help in conducting your evaluation.

9. **STAY CREATIVE AND FLEXIBLE** — Your community school program may look different in practice than it did on paper. That is not only natural, but advisable. Your plan and vision statement should serve as guides, not straitjackets. In reality, your school should be evolving and allowing for exciting new possibilities and creative ideas every day.

Major change does not come easy. The temptation to maintain the status quo or to make only small adjustments can be strong, especially when you are confronted with challenges as overwhelming as those presented by our nation's schools. But too often small changes yield only small results.

Building a community school means having the courage to bring about radical change; it means transforming and redefining forever how you and your neighbors view the school as an institution. It takes hard work, careful planning, the full participation of all segments of the community, patience, creativity, and a willingness to hold the interests of our children above all else. Most of all, the creation of a community school requires an abiding belief that all children can learn and succeed in school if they are given the love, respect and support they need and deserve.

Postscript: Washington Heights Five Years Later

Postscript: Washington Heights Five Years Later

Five years after opening the first of the Washington Heights community schools, there have been a number of tangible results relating to academic performance, attendance, the children's health, the creation of positive learning environments for children, and a greater sense of community both within the schools and within the wider Washington Heights neighborhood. Since IS 218 and PS 5 have been opened longer than IS 90 and PS 8, much of the hard data on academic improvements come from those schools. Evaluations are also underway at the newer schools, which opened during the 1995-96 school year.

✎ Improved Academic Performance

In preliminary evaluations at IS 218 and PS 5, reading and math scores have been higher than at comparable neighborhood schools, and sequentially higher for youngsters who have been in the schools for two or more years. At IS 218, math performance rose from 37 percent at grade level in 1994, to 44 percent in 1995 and 51 percent in 1996. In the third grade class that entered PS 5 in 1993, its first year in operation, only 10.4 percent of students were reading at grade level. In that same class, students reading at grade level rose to 16.2 percent in the fourth grade, and to 35.4 percent in the fifth grade. Math achievement at PS 5 increased from 23.4 percent at grade level in third grade in 1993, to 32.1 percent in fourth grade, and 56 percent in fifth grade.

Scores are still not as high as in schools with a selected student body or in higher income areas, but they are improving yearly. IS 218 and IS 90 have also been especially successful at gaining admission for their graduates into the city's specialized high schools, giving these youngsters a real leg up in terms of college and professional success.

Attendance

Attendance rates, including teacher attendance, have been higher than at other local schools. IS 218, at 92 percent, has the highest attendance rate in the district and surpasses the New York City middle school standard of 85 percent. PS 5 has an attendance rate above 94 percent. Attendance rates have improved each year since the schools opened.

Little or No Violence

In a city where violent incidents on school grounds are an all-too-common occurrence and students have become accustomed to metal detectors and security searches, IS 218 has had no violent incidents since its opening in 1992, and no graffiti. While the suspension rate for all New York City middle schools stands at 6.8 suspensions per 100 students, IS 218 averages 2.2 per 100 students.

High Level of Parental Involvement

The schools have made every effort to include parents in the activities of the school, helping to tear down the wall that traditionally exists between parents and educators, especially at the middle school level. There is an average of 100 parents coming into the Family Resource Centers at each school each day for information or services. Staff estimate that every parent has visited the Resource Centers at least once and that 70 percent have used these services on an ongoing basis.

Greater Access to Health and Social Services

The on-site medical, dental and eye clinics at the schools provide some 25,000 appointments a year. Every student has been seen at least once every year, as have some of their siblings. The impact of these services is reflected in the higher attendance rates at the schools and, anecdotally, in reduced reliance on hospital emergency room services and calls from school to the emergency

number 911. Demand for mental health services, including individual therapy, family counseling and crisis intervention, has been unexpectedly high at these schools, and we are striving to meet it. At IS 90 and PS 8, approximately 40 children were referred for mental health services each month during the 1996-97 school year.

A Positive School Culture

Visitors to the schools notice very quickly that they "feel different." There is a community feeling throughout all of the community schools in Washington Heights. Parents know one another and extend a helping hand to each other. Teachers and other school staff interact with parents with respect and encouragement. They view the children more holistically than do teachers in other schools, and see the extended-day programs as allowing them to build a closer relationship with the students. All in all, there is a spirit of cooperation, enthusiasm, and optimism that does not exist in many schools.

Teachers Free to Focus on Education

In a formative evaluation of PS 5 by Fordham University, researchers found that the most consistent comment heard from staff was that the wide range of services offered at the school freed teachers to do what they were hired to do: teach the children. Because children's needs in these areas are being met and because teachers have the luxury of giving many students more individualized attention during the extended-day program, they can focus exclusively on teaching during the classroom time.

Despite the challenges, the community school concept at work in Washington Heights is proving that if given the opportunities and support they need all children can learn and thrive in school.

It is also demonstrating that supporting full-service schools does not mean that we turn our backs on education reform, but, rather, that we broaden

our definition of it. By bringing a panoply of new resources into the public school, lightening the burden of teachers and students alike, community schools can create a supportive environment in which the best education reforms have a real chance of success — and, more important, so do the children.

In the Washington Heights community schools, the children have to be ushered out in the evening, and are lined up again at the door at 7 am in the morning. That may be the most important measure of success of all.

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